

# South Dakota

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

#SaveLWCF



America's most important conservation and recreation program will expire in less than a year unless Congress acts. For 52 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has protected national parks and open spaces in every corner of the United States. But in less than 52 weeks, it could be gone forever and along with it, future protection of the places we love.

[LWCF](#) has invested more than \$92 million to protect South Dakota's grasslands, rivers, and increase recreation access. From national wildlife refuges to community parks, LWCF has protected places like Black Hills National Forest, Dakota Tallgrass Prairie, Wind Cave National Park, Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, and Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge.

South Dakota's \$4.7 billion outdoor recreation industry is an economic powerhouse – supporting 48,000 jobs which generate \$1.2 billion in wages and salaries and produces \$255 million annually in state and local tax revenue.

## Dakota Grassland Conservation Area

Known as "America's Duck Factory," the Prairie Pothole Region of South Dakota is one of the most important migratory bird habitats in the Western Hemisphere. Unfortunately it is also one of the most altered as wetlands are drained and native grasslands destroyed. To stem the loss of habitat, LWCF funding for voluntary wetland and grassland conservation easements on private working farms and ranches is essential. Since 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited has partnered with landowners to secure easements on 13,700 acres. To ensure a sustainable future for this vital habitat and the migratory birds that depend on it, the Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area has a bold vision for wetland and critical grassland habitat protection. Currently, 800 landowners are on the waitlist for the program.



*Prairie Potholes South Dakota Credit: USFWS*

**"Most people don't recall that LWCF played a critical role in helping Rapid City recover from the devastating 1972 flooding event that cost lives and millions of dollars of property damage along the flood plain of Rapid Creek and the mouth of Dart Canyon. However, this area used LWCF Funds, in partnership with other investment, to reclaim and recover that flood plain and provide the "green space" which currently includes the parks, picnic areas, public golf course and walking paths so used and admired by residents and visitors today. . . South Dakota strongly supports LWCF investments to ensure our land, water and recreation heritage are conserved for coming generations. It just makes common sense from both a quality of life and economic benefit standpoint."**

***-John Cooper, former Secretary of the Department of Game Fish and Parks in South Dakota***

## Custer State Park

The first and largest state park in South Dakota, Custer State Park encompasses 71,000 acres of spectacular terrain in the Black Hills. The famous Needles Highway, named for the granite spires that pierce the horizon along the highway, winds through the park past Sylvan Lake. The Iron Mountain Road, which connects Custer State Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial, passes through the beautiful Black Hills and features three tunnels that frame Mount Rushmore in the distance. Recreation opportunities include outstanding hunting for elk, deer, antelope, and turkey; high quality trout fishing; and hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails. Custer State Park has received 23 separate grants from LWCF protecting the rugged and unique scenery of the Black Hills.



*Bison at Custer State Park*

**#SaveLWCF to save the places we love in South Dakota!**

[www.lwcfcoalition.org/lwcf52weeks/](http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/lwcf52weeks/)